

TWO PAGE FAX

Fx to 805-644-3958

population. 5) The need for the San Nicolas translocation effort to protect against oil spills should be reevaluated in light of recent developments. 6) The no-otter zone has been ineffectual at protecting shellfish populations that have declined due to over-fishing and disease. 6) Recovery of sea otters is unlikely without re-habitation of the waters south of Point Conception. 7) Exclusion of sea otters from the "no-otter zone" is exceedingly expensive and does not appear to be an effective use of taxpayer money. The Board of Directors is reviewing our formal letter today. We hope that our letter will be posted on our website: www.otterproject.org within a very few days.

The USFWS has announced their intent to review the Environmental Impact Statement (a summary of the notice of intent and FAQs can be viewed at: http://www.r1.fws.gov/vfo/SSO_page.html that enabled the sea otter translocation to San Nicolas Island. The USFWS is holding scoping meetings next week. Those opposed to sea otters becoming reestablished in their historic range will show up especially in Santa Barbara in large numbers. It is important that the general public show support to sea otters by attending a meeting or sending written comments.

Public scoping meetings will be held on the following dates:

1. August 15, 2000, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., Santa Barbara, CA at the Radisson Hotel.

2. August 17, 2000, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., Monterey, CA at the Monterey Conference Center.

Registration will begin 1 hour prior to each meeting session.

Written comments (September 29 deadline) can be sent to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office, 2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura CA 93003, attention Greg Sanders.

Comments can also be faxed to: 805/644-3958, or sent on e-mail to: fw1ottreis@r1.fws.gov. Please submit comments in ASCII file format and avoid the use of special characters and encryption. Include a name and address in the e-mail message.

Look for The Otter Project's comments on our website www.otterproject.org in the next few days.

Sincerely,
Steve Shimek
Executive Director

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Mussen Realty
Michele Mussen
1817 Rose St.
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8/24/00
FROM: Michele Mussen

TO the U.S. Fish &
Wildlife Department -

please leave ~~SAVE~~
the OTTERS / PLEASE
declare the sea
otter translocation
to San Nicolas Island
a failure. Please
eliminate the no-otter
zone, please STOP
REMOVING sea
otters from San
Nicolas Island
and the zone.
Michele Mussen

Subj: **Otter Yelp E-Alert**
Date: 8/9/00 8:31:16 AM Pacific Daylight Time
From: exec@otterproject.org (Steve Shimek)
To: exec@otterproject.org

August 9, 2000

In this issue:

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has called for meetings August 15 and August 17 to discuss sea otters. Public support for sea otters at these meetings is critical.

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As you may know, the USFWS moved (translocated) 140 southern sea otters from central California to the San Nicolas Island (in the Channel Islands of Southern California) in 1987 through 1990. The USFWS had the best of intentions: establish a second nucleus of a population in case the primary population is catastrophically devastated by an oil spill. You can read about the translocation on our website: http://www.otterproject.org/esu_1296/08.html.

As part of the plan, urchin and abalone fishermen demanded that a "no-otter zone" be created between Point Conception (south of Morro Bay and north of Santa Barbara) and the Mexican border and including all the Channel Islands except San Nicolas. Sea otters were to be excluded, and removed, from this area.

This has proven to be a huge problem. The sea otters on San Nicolas have not established a viable population 13 years after the translocation of 140 otters there are only 20 otters left. Sea otters from the more northern "parent population" cannot "see" the line and are expanding their range south into the "no-otter zone." The fishermen are complaining that the USFWS is not removing the sea otters from the zone and have filed a lawsuit.

Two weeks ago, the USFWS filed a "Biological Opinion" stating that they cannot remove the otters because their first responsibility is the protection of the species. The Biological Opinion can be read at: http://www.r1.fws.gov/viwo/SSO_page.html.

The only permanent way out of this mess is for the USFWS to declare the translocation to San Nicolas a failure - an action that would nullify the "no-otter zone." As the law stands, "failure" would require that the sea otters be removed from San Nicolas Island.

The Otter Project is requesting that USFWS immediately declare the sea otter translocation to San Nicolas Island a failure, eliminate the designated "no otter zone," and to not remove sea otters from San Nicolas Island or the zone.

We are basing our recommendation on the facts that: 1) Historically, translocation of sea otters has most often failed; the translocation program to San Nicolas Island has failed and should be discontinued. 2) If sea otters are removed from either San Nicolas Island or from the "no-otter zone," they will likely return. 3) Movement of sea otters is often lethal. 4) The repeated removal of sea otters from the no-otter zone will result in mortality and a drain upon the parent